

Dear Readers:

The special feature we promised you on the Music of Puerto Rico isn't in this issue, but it will appear in an issue next year. Instead, you'll find music from places like Spokane, Washington, Orange County, North Carolina, Aberdeen, Scotland, and Tucuman, Argentina. The holiday season is drawing near, and as always we'd like to encourage each and every one of you to buy a gift subscription for a friend, or to take out a contributing or sustaining subscription, which includes a special trial subscription for a friend. This is one of the best ways you can help us celebrate 25 years of continuing publication (some other ideas are on page 46), because a constantly growing subscription list is the only sure thing that will guarantee another 25 years of Sing Out!, The Folk Song Magazine.

Thanks,
— The Editors

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A SPECIAL NOTE

As a result of the tremendous quantity of mail we receive and the small size of our staff, it is extremely difficult for us to answer all correspondence promptly. We are more than pleased to receive songs, articles, artwork, teach-in's, photos, and requests for information, but please don't expect a quick answer. Any correspondence that requires a response (other than subscription and sales information) should include a stamped, self-addressed envelope; songs should be accompanied by a cassette if possible; please do not send us the only copy of anything you may want to have in the future. Thanks.

Cover photo by Michael Mathers from his book "Riding The Rails" (Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston: 1974), a fine collection of photos, narratives, and interviews, recommended to readers who find interest in the article by Bruce Phillips and Bodie Wagner on page 2.

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LITHO IN U.S.A.

Babylon Is Falling Down

"...be it known unto thee, O King, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."

— Daniel 3:18

"Babylon Is Falling Down" comes to us from Deacon Dan Smith, of White Plains, New York, whose fine gospel singing and exciting harp-playing have graced many a church hall, folk concert, and folk festival. It is a song of faith, of age-old resistance to wealth, tyranny, and power.

"Babylon" can be heard on Dan Smith's Biograph album (BLP 12036, Biograph Records, 16 River St., Chatham, NY 13037).



Dan Smith

photograph by David Gahr

Chorus B

Woh, Ba-by-lon, fall-in' down Woh,
Ba-by-lon, fall-in' down Woh, Ba-by-lon
fall-in' down That ci-ty of Ba-by-lon is
fall-in' down. Lord Ne-bu-chad-nez-zar, he was
King of Ba-by-lon By his com-mand made him
a god of gold Sent out a de-cree to
all of the people Come and bow down
when thee are told

VERSE

Woh, Babylon, fallin' down
Woh, Babylon, fallin' down
Woh, Babylon, fallin' down
That City of Babylon is fallin' down

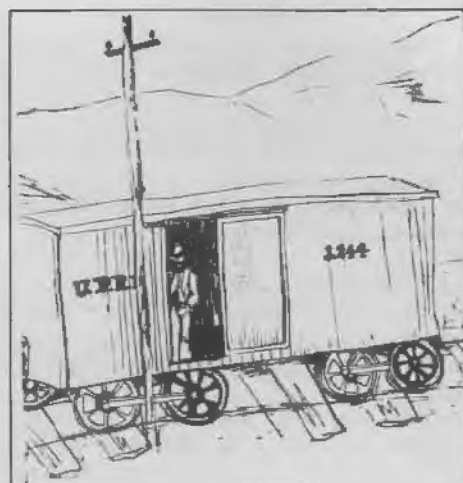
Nebuchadnezzar, he was King of
Babylon
By his command made him a god
of gold
Sent out a decree to all of the people
Come and bow down when thee
are told
Three Hebrews who refused to go
They was Shadrach, Meshach, and
Abednego
They said, "Oh, King, no reason to doubt
To our God only we will bow"
He cried: (Chorus)

Nebuchadnezzar, he had a dream
Greatest image that he'd ever seen
Looked at his head and his head
was gold
Said, "Awfullest sight ever to behold"
Breast and arms, they were made
of silver
God let that king know that he
could deliver
Breast and thighs, they were made
of brass
The King began to wonder how long
his kingdom would last
Looked at his legs, they were made
of iron
Nebuchadnezzar got troubled in mind
Calling his soothsayers of every kind
"Come and interpret this dream
of mine"
All of his soothsayers were standing
around
But the City of Babylon kept
falling down (Chorus)

Words and Music by Dan J. Smith
© 1972 by Dan Smith and
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SING OUT!

Old Buddy, Goodnight



Words and Music by Bruce Phillips
© 1973 by Wildflowers Music
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I was there when they opened the boxcar
And found him stone dead on the floor
Though thumbin' and bummin' was all
of our trade
No one had seen him before
He wore the face of a stranger
Lost and unseen in a crowd
He looked so small as we carried
him down
Wrapped in a newspaper shroud

Chorus:
The wind blows cold in Wyoming
The stars shine clear and bright
If you don't wake up tomorrow at all
I guess it's old buddy goodnight

His hair was the color of winter
All streaked with iron and coal
And all you could see in his soft
prairie eyes
Was the wind and the grass and the snow
The backs of his hands were like
roadmaps
The lines on his face were the same
And on his left arm a faded tattoo
Bordered a rose and a name (Chorus)

I don't know where he came from
His train was a U.P. freight
If there's someone waiting for him
down below
He'll be a little bit late
So give him a line in your paper
And here's what I want you to say:
"There's some things worse than
dying alone
And one of 'em's living that way."
(Chorus)

The snow in Wyoming is not the fluffy Eastern kind that makes good snowmen. Wyoming is high and the wind seems to blow all the time. The snow is little kernels of ice and the wind picks it up and sends it rattling like bullets against anything higher than a jack rabbit ... One winter a bunch of guys came up (to Joe Hill House in Salt Lake City) from the Roper yards after switching down from a U.P. westbound. They were almost frozen blue. We fed them our stew and pretty soon when everyone was warm, one guy came up to me and said, "There's an old fellow down in the yard who came in with us but he's sick and can't make it up." That made me mad, because they could have told us an hour earlier when they first came in. But that's the bum's ethic — me first. So some of us went down into the yard to look for the missing one. We cracked open four or five boxcars and found him. That's how I got this song.

— Utah Phillips

From Utah Phillips' album *Good Though!* (Philo 1004; Philo Records, The Barn, N. Ferrisburg, VT 05473). A second Phillips album, *El Capitan* (Philo 1016), was released in August.

OLD BUDDY, GOODNIGHT

RIDING THE RAILS (continued from page 3)

good bum knows those safety regulations and observes them just as rigorously as a switchman or brakeman.

There's the Frisco Road.

Bodie: Yep. This goddamn yard is a piece of cake, though. That's all there is to it.

Utah: I think it is. I tell you this yard could really make you careless, too. Hey, here's an old business car, set up as some kind of a dormitory.

Bodie: Probably where the engineers crash out while waiting for their trains, or something.

Utah: I would think so. Yeah, lockers for the brakies. Engineers is the elite. They wouldn't have no humble digs like that.

Utah: This is kind of a parenthetical insertion — Bodie went inside the tower here to size up what the schedule is, and I'm kinda just easing outside watching them humping and uncoupling. The switch engine is backing up with a bunch of cars. Then he'll stop sudden and one or two of those cars will uncouple. Now the switchman down there that has the manifest in his hand will move the switch so those cars cut off through the yard onto the train that they are supposed to be with. That's one style of switching. The other style is when you run the car up the hump and let it go down under its own gravity.

Bodie is in there finding out what's going on. J.B. is back watching the equipment. There's an awful lot of bums in this yard. They are bluff, scruffy looking, fairly old, 40 to 60 — got good tans, got a lot of red on the back of their necks, which means they've been bending over a lot, probably doing crop work. It's the time around here. You know the snow is just about gone from this Peak, which means it's just about time to plant. Which means that you hire agriculture work around here to do your plowing, and now they are headed out to do some other kind of work.

What did you find out in there? Is that guy telling the truth?

Bodie: Yeah he was telling the truth.

Utah: The only hotshot you're going to get out is 11 in the morning?

Bodie: No, it's going to be the stock train on the end of the yard. They'll be taking it on up to Whitefish and I'll probably hop another one out of there. We'll spend some time in Whitefish maybe. What the hell.

Utah: Go in Casey's, give my regards to the barkeep.

Bodie: Right. I'd sure as hell be happier sitting around in SING OUT!

Whitefish than sitting on a goddamn freeway. Well...why don't we walk across these yards.

Bodie: Let's cross on this flat car.

Utah: Did you hear that? There's a goat car over there...oh, they're sheep. Oh, mercy, those sheep smell bad, but they sure generate a lot of heat. You know that? You sleep down in between two of them damn things and you're gonna...

Bodie: Are they talking to you, Phillips?

Utah: They're talking to me. Look at that, isn't that a terrible way to treat an animal? Do you know what it's like to be one car back from a string of cars like this, with all of that decomposed hay, and sheepshit down on the bottom?

Bodie: I'm not going to ride in a sheep car.

Utah: I think that you ought to, it's warm in there — you get down in between 3 or 4 of them damn things and they generate a lot of heat.

Bodie: I ain't gonna do it.

Utah: Have you ever rode in a plaster car? It carries wallboard and cement bags.

Bodie: Yeah, with the white dust all over.

Utah: The dust gets wet and then it cakes in your eyes.

Bodie: Wet down a bandana and put it over your face, that's the only way to survive that situation.

Utah: Fertilizer car is the same. Look, it's really going somewhere, because he's holding the journals on the sheep. I ought to explain what I meant — the sheep don't have journals but box cars do. So what he's doing is going around with a metal hook, reaching down here and pulling up on these metal flats that are over the hubs on the wheels, and if there is no oil in there he is going to pour oil in there from the can. It's called greasing the journals. If they don't do that then the damn thing is going to run dry. Coming down a steep grade where they have to throw on all the air, it will start shooting out sparks. You can look back down the train and see sparks shooting out from every damn car — it's what they call a "blazer."

Utah: Look back down...remember all the bums we saw sitting down there? Well, they are gone.

Bodie: They're loaded.

Utah: Well, that means this thing is getting ready to move. The brakies have still got to come and check the air.

Bodie: We got a buncha time. I think we ought to ride with Smitty.

J.B.: Think so? That's a grain car, man, there's going to be

(continued on page 6)

These signs were used by hobos to pass on information to other hobos passing the same way. They are largely out of use now, but Utah asked us to include some in the hope that this situation may change.



RIDING THE RAILS (continued from page 5)

dust and bullshit blowing all over the place.

Utah: That's gonna be a damn dusty ride, and especially with your throat and your lungs the way they are.

I don't even have time for a drink of brandy, do I? Well, get up in there, open it, and give me some brandy while I'm waiting.

Bodie: Why don't you come up with us? You might as well sit on the car.

Utah: I'll sit there for a bit. Aggravating goddamn thing. Such a natural kind of way of life. Smitty, you get some music. You get some of the best music this side of heaven.

J.B.: Better than music we got brandy. I hope you are going to cockadoodle do by the end of this ride, 'cause we are going to eat a lot of chicken feed.

Utah: You really are. And you are going to be dusty, and you are going to be drunk, and your lungs are going to be congested, and you are going to be half dead and frozen. And you are going to get off there, and you are going to go into a bar and take out your guitar and say, "I just came in on a freight from Spokane, didn't we have a wonderful time, ain't it great being on the road."

Smitty: You stay here?

Utah: I live in Spokane now. I've been on Dirty Face for a long time, but now I got myself a little place here and a little grubstake, so I don't have to get out and hustle. As much as I'd like to, I just can't see tearing myself away from it.

Bodie: We got to talk this man into riding with us. If we don't talk him into riding with us, we won't have nothing to listen to all night, really.

J.B.: I think you really ought to stay, too.

Utah: Why do you think I ought to stay?

J.B.: For all the reasons that you were saying.

Utah: How come you did this? Why are you out here crawling off the end of the world?

Smitty: I had a little bit of difficulty. My wife died, nothing but bills, and I had to sell it. And this is where I've been living at...

Utah: That's what this train is for — for you.

Bodie: It was built for you.

Utah: You got no money, and you have to get where you can make some money, so you're gonna ride on this damn train.

Smitty: That's right.

Utah: That's all there is to it. Do you know how many times some kid comes up to me and says, "I want to ride?" Because he's going to college, he goes home and he's sick of home, and he goes out on a date and he's sick...everything is just kind of bland, like eating milk toast every morning. And he says, "I've got to ride, I've got to ride for the fun and the adventure," and he just doesn't understand that the thing is here for people who are up against it. If you go skylarking around on these goddamn things, they'll kill you sooner or later.

J.B.: But you know, Phillips, there's different kinds of being up against it.

Utah: I wouldn't want to deny that that kid in college was up against it. Damn straight. Because the system has dealt as bad with him as it has with the bricklayer...just in a more subtle way. The college boy is going to churn out the goods in terms of services and brain power, and the bricklayer is going to churn it out in body power. Either way they are being had, so that's up against it sure, but at least he's got some language and some words, at least he can go and get by — he can scuffle a little bit more inventively than somebody who never had the opportunity to get that language.

Utah: What is that?

Bodie: Wonderful, we're gonna move.

J.B.: You ready?

Bodie: That was the slack they were just taking up, folks.

Utah: It ain't gonna happen yet. Oh, it is happening. Let me off of this.

J.B.: Hold that bottle, hold that bottle. Don't let that man go.

Bodie: You don't want to go yet.

Utah: I gotta get off this damn thing.

J.B.: You go down, I'll hand this to you.

Utah: O.K. Thanks very much. Goodbye. Have a good trip down the road. Send me a letter or something.

J.B.: Take care. Que sera sera, have a good time.

Utah: Have a good trip. Que sera sera, have a good time.

Utah: There she goes. That is the hot shot. It is rolling slow because it's so darn long; they must have hooked 6 car units up ahead. You can tell it's the high line: there are grain loading cars, there's some Pacific Fruit Express, some

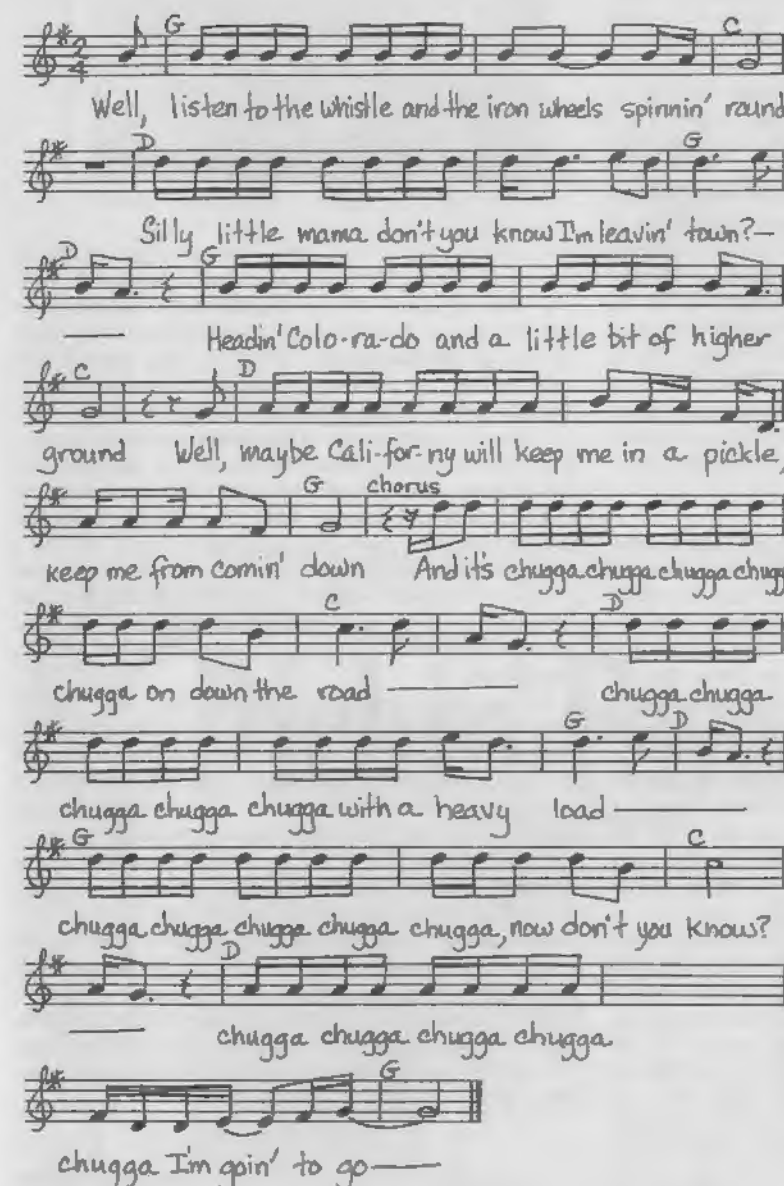
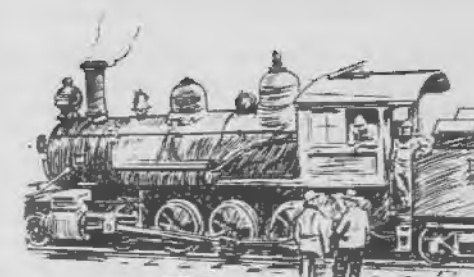
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SING OUT!

Chugga-Tramp

From the album *Bodie Wagner* (Philo 1015; Philo Records, The Barn, N. Ferrisburg, VT 05473).

Words and Music by Bodie Wagner
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Well, listen to the whistle and the iron wheels spinnin' round
Silly little mama, don't you know I'm leavin' town?
Headin' Colorado and a little bit of higher ground
Well, maybe Californy will keep me in a pickle, keep me from comin' down

Chorus:
And it's chugga chugga chugga chugga
chugga on down the road
Chugga chugga chugga chugga
with a heavy load
Chugga chugga chugga chugga,
now don't you know?
Chugga chugga chugga chugga
I'm goin' to go

Well, rollin' down the road, sittin' on a big feed sack
Mama, don't you know there's nothin' in the world I lack
Every time I go, I don't know if I'm a-comin' back, sweet honey
Every time I ride your railroad train, every time I roll that track (Chorus)

It's fiddle in the middle and a little bit of hummin', too
Suckin' and a-blowin' on my harp till the boy turns blue
Sippin' on my wine and ride a little time with you, sweet honey
Soon I got to hit your railroad train, honey, yes indeed I do (Chorus)

Well, pickin' down the road, followin' a lonesome call
Honey, don't you know I'm a-goin' where my footsteps fall
Wonderin' if anybody ever gives a damn at all
Sittin' in a lonely boxcar, babe, followin' the cannonball (Chorus)

drawings by Leigh George from the Utah Phillips songbook "Starlight On The Rails," Wooden Shoe Publ., POB 1794, San Francisco, CA 94101

SING OUT!

Railroading On The Great Divide

"In the early '60's, while on a visit to the home of Sara Carter at Angels Camp, California, she suggested we might sing this song which she had composed. I recall this song in the context of the clear air of the high Sierras, and the isolated life of this dignified woman who gave it to us."

— John Cohen

The original Carter Family recording can be heard on Pine Mountain PMR 208 (Pine Mountain Records, POB 584, Barbourville, KY). The New Lost City Ramblers' recording is on their latest Folkways album *On The Great Divide* (FTS31041; Folkways Records, 17 W. 61st St., New York; NY 10023).



photograph by Robert Alexander

Sara Carter, appearing at a rare musical reunion with Mother Maybelle Carter, August 23, at the A. P. Carter Memorial Festival in the Carters' home town in Poor Valley, Virginia.

Nine-teen and six-teen I left my old home
Out in the West, no money no home
I went drifting a-long with the tide
And landed on the Great Di- vide

Chorus
Rail-roading on the Great Di- vide
Nothing a-round me but Rockies and
sky
There you'll find me as years roll
by
Rail-roading on the Great Di- vide

Nineteen and sixteen I left my old home
Out in the West, no money, no home
I went drifting along with the tide
And landed on the Great Divide

Chorus:
Railroading on the Great Divide
Nothing around me but Rockies and sky
There you'll find me as years roll by
Railroading on the Great Divide

Ask any oldtimer in old Cheyenne
Wyoming railroading's the best in
the land
A long steel rail and a short cross-tie
I laid across the Great Divide (Chorus)

As I looked out across the trees
Number Three coming, the fastest
on wheels
Through old Laramie she glides
with pride
And rolls across the Great Divide
(Chorus)

Words and Music by Sara Carter
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"Back Before The Blues Were Blues..."



Dink Roberts
photograph by Cecelia Conway

Pre-Blues Secular Music in North Carolina by BRUCE BASTIN

Very little is known about black secular music in the eastern states before blues emerged in the early years of this century. That the banjo was introduced into the United States, or at least brought into prominence, by slaves seems accepted — even Thomas Jefferson made reference to it — and throughout the nineteenth century, blacks played banjo and fiddle, often for white functions. A very few articles but many pictures from the nineteenth century show the use of these instruments, but we have virtually no knowledge of the types of secular music played. Only religious music was transcribed and annotated; dance music was considered beneath respect, both by white "collectors" and middle-class blacks.

The first decade of the twentieth century, following the deterioration of race relations in the 1890's, saw a reaction against the apparent stereotype of the black banjo player, combined with changing musical needs. The banjo became replaced by the guitar in black tradition, and many older songs faded away as blues became the new music. By the 1920's, the banjo and fiddle were anachronisms in the mainstream of popular black music.

Crying for the Carolines, published in 1971, was my attempt to piece together an historical approach to the distinct Piedmont blues style which had emerged in the southeastern states. It became more and more evident that I was not dealing with a dead tradition — apart from some 1949 Atlanta recordings, the last commercial blues session in the Southeast had been in 1938 — but one that had gone underground. Slowly there began to emerge a picture of the pre-blues tradition. Not only were some musicians able to recall the early days of this century when such music was performed, but a large number of talented musicians remained, still capable of playing in that style, and, in some cases, incapable of playing blues at all. This older style failed to disappear as blues emerged but continued to run parallel.

Really we ought not to have been greatly surprised. Mike Seeger pointed the way when the first Elizabeth Cotten album was released. Most of her music obviously predated blues, being a synthesis of ragtime, country dance tunes, marches

and local popular tunes, like "Freight Train."* Interviewing musicians further east in Nash and Edgecombe counties I had come across evidence of a string band tradition, playing for dances in a markedly non-blues manner. A relatively young bluesman, Elester Anderson, who played mostly Blind Boy Fuller songs, still knew a gentle pre-blues tune, "Further Down The Road," which he learned from a maternal uncle, Junie Bradley.* In Orange County, where Elizabeth Cotten was Fuller, played a beautiful dance tune which he called "Wild Bill," with distinct similarities to Cotten's "Wilson Rag."** Not surprisingly, Willie's mother knew Libba Cotten before she left Chapel Hill. Prying further into this musical background, a broader picture of the pre-blues scene became evident. It was two other local guitarists who really opened it up.

Jamie Alston (b. 1907) still has the steel National that he bought after hearing Blind Boy Fuller in nearby Durham, and he also plays a little banjo. Today his music is only for people who drop by, but he is proud of it. In his younger days — though he doesn't look his age — he played in a stringband, and thus carried on a family tradition of fine musicians. Wilbert Atwater (b. 1905) never played in public and seldom at parties and thus has a guitar style which is more personal and less influenced by popular music than Jamie's. Shy at first to sing what perhaps he felt might be thought archaic music, Wilbert opened up at last and was the source of some fine pre-blues material. A truck-farmer and haulage-contractor, Wilbert is a fund of weather-lore and farm (continued on page 14)

Bruce Bastin is a British folklorist, author of *Crying For The Carolines* (Studio Vista, London: 1971), a pioneering work about the Piedmont blues of the southeastern United States. (This book is available from Blues Unlimited, 38a Sackville Rd, Bexhill-on-Sea, Sussex, England, or Folklore Associates, Hatboro, Pennsylvania.) Bruce spent 1972 and 1973 around Chapel Hill, N.C. receiving a Master's Degree in folklore and doing research into black pre-blues secular music. He is also involved with the Flyright Record Company, a British blues label.

"Fox Chase" is a musical showpiece used in innumerable forms by black and white instrumentalists in the South, combining a galloping rhythm, instrumental virtuosity, and a part-sung, part-spoken narrative. This banjo version comes from James Phillips "Dink" Roberts of Alamance County, North Carolina. It was recorded and transcribed by Tommy Thompson and Cecelia Conway. The words record one particular singing only, since Dink never sings the same words twice.



cian, available from them at 1720 Allard Drive, Chapel Hill, NC 27514. Versions of "Fox Chase" by both Dink Roberts and John Snipes will appear on an upcoming Flyright LP.



beliefs; a quiet, gentle man, whose music shows aurally the almost raw transposition of a melody from banjo to guitar.

"Luther...he was older than any of them [other uncles]. He was good. Right too. Played "Coo coo was a fine bird," "Old Black Annie." He played that song about "Reuben," you know, on banjo. He played "John Henry." If he could have met someone back then who was in the business of making records, he'd been a good one. He'd a been a whole lot better than ones as was out...He died in 1933. He called them ragtime songs. He played

Jamie and Wilbert led me to an elderly banjo player, John Snipes, whom they stated used to play old dance tunes along with Jamie's father.⁶ Not only did Snipes have his old fretless banjo but a good deal of ability too. He learned most of his songs before 1920 from three of the finest banjo players around Orange County. Duke Mason was from Durham and his recently-discovered brother, Robert, was one of the best 12-string guitarists. Will Baldwin was Wilbert Atwater's father-in-law and reputedly the county's best banjo player. Jamie Alston's grandfather, Dave Alston, was another banjo player and besides handing on some of his skills to John Snipes, taught his own son to become one of the best dance tune guitarists in the county. Jamie Alston, Sr. (Bud or Buddy to his friends) played most of his time with Snipes,

SING OUT!



Rooster's "cup-cak": (banjo)
Says "Son" - "What you want Pap?"
"Your mammy 'bout to worry me
to death
Go out yonder
Get your harn and put round your
shoulder
Call up old Rattler
Call up old Rattler like this" (banjo)
Old lady come back up, down the hall
"Run him all day
You run him all night"
There ' goes
Fox looked back in the east
And saw the sun rising
"God bless my red-eyed time
Done set the world on fire!"

Orange County had many other fine musicians as well. Bill Britton, long since dead, played banjo. Willie Cotten, one of whose sons married Elizabeth, was a good guitarist but also played banjo. Matthew "Matty" Hackney's brother used to play banjo and mandolin, and while Matty tried the latter, he mainly played guitar. Though he doesn't play now, he is remembered by Jamie and Wilbert as a fine player in Spanish tuning. Born before the turn of the century, Matty Hackney played with a string band in Chatham County, to the immediate south. Around Chapel Hill, bluesman Floyd Council — the only guitarist other than Gary Davis to have backed Blind Boy Fuller on record — played with Thomas Strowd on mandolin and ukelele, and brother Leo Strowd on tambourine and drums, appearing as the Chapel Hillbillies! Floyd also played with George Letlow.

By no means were all the musicians in the county black and both Jamie and Wilbert remember white musicians when recalling names of earlier players. John Snipes remembered that the only fiddler he knew was white — and it seems he occasionally played with him in private. It was a white man who fixed his splendid small banjo, obtained some 50 years ago from his brother Floyd, yet another banjo player. Willie Trice, trying to recall fiddle players, remembered a father-son fiddle/guitar pair, with whom he played — and they were white. There was often interplay between white and black musicians in parts of the south, more often in private than public, but many of the itinerant shows carried mixed groups of musicians. Dr. Kerr of Spartanburg, with whom Pink

(continued on page 16)



Protest Singers of Latin America

Mercedes Sosa

by BOB NORMAN

Mercedes was born in Tucuman Province in central Argentina on July 9, 1935. "My childhood was very poor. The only thing that saved my family from misery was its togetherness. That is why I'm not resentful in spite of the terrible conditions of my childhood." Though her grandfather spoke a perfect Quechua, her family was not of Indian background. Mercedes taught dancing in order to go through high school and receive a degree. Encouraged by friends, she made her first appearance as a singer on the radio at the age of 15: "But one day the director said something about folk music and folksingers that I didn't like, and I told him so. That was the end of my first radio career."

Nonetheless, Mercedes decided to devote herself to singing. Though she found it impossible to support herself as a folksinger in Buenos Aires, her reputation gradually grew through appearances at festivals and theaters throughout the country. She began to sing the new protest songs being composed in Argentina, and also throughout Latin America, particularly those from nearby Uruguay and Chile. In 1962, with other artists and intellectuals, she helped found the "Nuevo Cancionero" ("New Singers") group, something like People's Songs which founded this magazine. By now she has appeared on all the major television stations in Argentina, has recorded 16 albums, and has toured throughout Latin America, Europe, the U.S.S.R. and briefly, the U.S.A.

The acceptance of folksingers in Argentina was probably helped by the truly working-class, populist, and nationalist elements of the early Peronist movement. Seventy per cent of songs sung at festivals are still supposed to be Argentinian, but the past two decades has seen increasing dominance by foreign capital and culture: "Some Argentinian singers have imitated North Americans and sing ballads, but I stick to Argentinian style. I always use the folk rhythm, so that the people will understand. (No less than 127 distinct rhythms have been identified in Argentinian music!) The record companies have been totally colonized by European and North American companies. I record for Philips (a British label), but I demand complete artistic freedom and use only Argentinian personnel. I will not allow control of my music."

Yet as the conflict between the needs of Argentinian workers and the demands of foreign capital has led the country to the brink of economic chaos and civil conflict, as the old-guard Peronists and the military have become increasingly reactionary and repressive, as the cancer of fascism, backed by our very own government, has spread throughout Latin America, the militance and popularity of singers like Mercedes has become viewed as a threat. All folk festivals were banned, at least temporarily, last winter. Several singers have left the country as the result of threats by the Argentine Anti-Communist Alliance, a secret right-wing

(continued on page 27)

Bob Norman is the editor of Sing Out!

Cancion Con Todos (Song for All)

Mercedes Sosa has been called "The Voice of the Americas," and this song is her finest expression of the continental solidarity that has been the hallmark of the new Latin American song. Mercedes and Joan Baez sang this song together during Mercedes' tour of the U.S. in 1975, and she particularly asked us to print it here with the hope that it can become a song for all the Americas, North and South.

From the Phillips album *El Grito de la Tierra*, available from Rizzoli's International Bookstore, 712 5th Ave., New York, NY.



—Kathy English

Slowly and freely

Salgo a cami-nar por la cin-tu-ra
co-smi-ca del sol pi-so en la re-gion más vegetal del
vien-to y de la luz siento al cami-nar toda la piel de A-
me-ri-ca en mi piel y an-da en mi san-gre un
rí-o, qui li-be-ra en mi voz su cau-del
To-das las vo-ces to-das, to-das las ma-nos to-das
to-da la san-gre pue-de ser can-cion en el vien-to
Can-ta con mi-go, can-ta, her-ma-no A-me-ri-ca-no
y ver-as una es-pe-ran-za con un gri-to en la voz—

Words and Music by Tejada Gomez-Isella
English translation by Helena Farber de Aguilar

Salgo a caminar por la cintura cosmica
del sol
piso en la region mas vegetal del viento
y de la luz
Siento al caminar, toda la piel de
America en mi piel
y anda en mi sangre un rio qui
libera en mi voz su caudal

Sol de Alto Peru, rostro Bolivia esta
en mi soledad
un verde Brasil besa mi Chile cobre
y mineral
Subo desde el Sur hacia la entrana
America y total
una raiz de un grito destinado a
crecer y estallar

Chorus:

Todas las voces todas, todas las
manos todas
toda la sangre puede ser cancion
en el viento
Canta conmigo, canta, hermano
Americano
y veras una esperanza con un grito
en la voz

I go out walking along the cosmic
waistline of the sun
I tread in the lushest region of wind
and light
Walking I feel the whole skin of
America in my skin
And in my blood a river moves, loosing
its current in my voice

Sun of high Peru, Bolivia's face in
my solitude
A green Brazil kisses my coppery,
mineral Chile
I rise from the south towards the
heart of a complete America
The root of a cry, destined to
grow and explode

Chorus:

All the voices, all of them
All the hands, all blood, can be a
song in the wind
Sing with me, sing, American
brothers and sisters
And hope will arise with the cry in
your voice

Hazel & Alice: Two Songs for Working Women

Working Girl Blues

Words and music by Hazel Dickens.
© 1975 by Wynwood Music.
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I got the early Mon-day mor-nin' workin'
blues — I put on my ragged worn-out workin'
shoes — Well, the weekend was too short,
but I can't choose — When the
Lord made the workin' girl he made the
blues — Well, I'm tired of workin'
my life a-way — and givin'
somebo-dy else all of my pay, hey hey hey
While they get rich on the profits that I
lose — And leavin' me here with the
work-ing girl blues —

I got the early Monday mornin'
workin' blues
I put on my ragged, worn out
workin' shoes
Well, the weekend was too short, but
I can't choose
When the Lord made the working girl,
he made the blues

Chorus:
I'm tired of workin' my life away
Giving somebody else all of my pay,
hey hey hey
While they get rich on the profits
that I lose
Leavin' me here with the working
girl blues

A-de-o-de-lee, workin' girl blues
And I can't even afford a new pair
of shoes
While they can live in any old
penthouse they choose
And all that I've got is the
working girl blues

My boss says a raise is due most
any day
But I wonder will my hair be all
turned gray?
Before he turns that dollar loose
and I get my due
And lose a little bit of these working
girl blues (Chorus)

Well, my rent was raised again
just the other day
Although my landlord's a millionaire
they say
The poor get poorer and the rich get
richer it's true
When the Lord made the working girl
he made the blues (Chorus)

Mary Johnson

Words and music by Alice Gerrard. © 1975 by Wynwood Music. Used by Permission.

I'm just sittin' in this barroom, yes, that's whiskey that you see And my
name is Ma-ry John-son Lord, my feet are killin' me I've been
workin' hard, and I just stopped in be-fore I head on home — And if you're
thinkin' something differ-ent friend, well you sure are thinkin' wrong And if you
think you're readin' want to — In these big brown eyes of mine Well, it's
on-ly a re-flec-tion — of the want to in your mind —



Hazel Dickens and Alice Gerrard
photograph by David Gahr

I'm just sittin' in this barroom, yes,
that's whiskey that you see
And my name is Mary Johnson,
Lord, my feet are killin' me
I've been workin' hard, and I just
stopped in before I head on home
And if you're thinkin' something different
friend, well you sure are thinkin' wrong

Chorus:
And if you think you're readin' want to
In these big brown eyes of mine
Well, it's only a reflection
Of the want to in your mind

Now I like good time talkin', and I
like good company
And if you could see it my way, well
you know we might be friends
But you think my being here alone's
an invitation to my bed
And this drink you think has turned
me on has only turned your head
(Chorus)

Now we all get lonely sometimes, and
this might be your time
And you're seein' satin pillows, sweet
perfume, forbidden wine
And you think I'm thinkin' on those
lines, and now and then I do
But just like you, the want to's a
little thing I like to choose (Chorus)

Both these songs will appear on Hazel & Alice's
second album for Rounder Records. Write
RoundHouse, POB 747, Somerville, MA 02144
for details.

JEANNIE ROBERTSON: More Than a Myth

by ANDREW MEANS & SARA GREY MEANS

"I enjoyed the summer of youth while it lasted,
and even the autumn;
The winter of age, which overwhelms everyone,
has begun to overtake me...
I had my day with kings, drinking mead
and wine;
Today I drink whey and water..."

(from a ninth century Irish poem "The Lament
of the Old Woman of Beare")

When she died at her home in Aberdeen on March 13th, 1975, Jeannie Robertson was already venerated as a "monumental figure in the world of folksong." Her myth had grown so vast as to completely overshadow the woman herself, and in her last few painful months there were signs that this bred resentment. As she sat all day, every day, by her fire, wrapped against the cold, silently musing, talking guardedly with the few visitors she received, she undoubtedly thought on the Jeannie Robertson legend that had spanned the English-speaking world and wondered how it was that legends go marching on like headless phantoms. She said as much. Recordings had been made and spirited away, to re-surface in the mouth of another singer or on a disc with no hope of royalties. Somewhere inside lurked the feeling that more than once she had been manipulated and discarded, despite the friends she had made and the pride and gladness with which she regarded her own singing career and the folk world in general.

It would be no exaggeration to credit Jeannie with being one of the inspirations of the folk festival in the British Isles. Her initial meeting with Hamish Henderson (of the School of Scottish Studies, Edinburgh University) in 1953 was remarkable evidence of the continuity of traditional folk song, and her introduction to the mainstream of the revival enriched it immensely. To some extent this enrichment became a one-way process as Jeannie was faced with the pressures of international acclaim. Her world was essentially one in which her ballads were a part of everyday life. She sang, and among her own people she was well known for it. But before her 'discovery' by the world at large, there was little distinction made between Jeannie the woman and Jeannie the singer. She was unacquainted with the gulf between her way of life and the revival, which, for all its homespun niceties, was far more calculated and reputation-conscious than the life to which she was accustomed. No doubt she enjoyed some of the glamour and hitherto unimagined fame, including the award of the M.B.E. (Member of the Order of the British Empire) in 1968 for her contribution in the field of folk music, but essentially she was a fish out of water.

There was a rift in culture — and, to some extent, class — between Jeannie's family and some of the collectors, writers and singers who sought to acquire her material. She became a



drawing by Andrew Means

casualty of their reverence for her as a source, and came to feel that she was valued only for what she could give. Ironically, she well might have had more to give, if she had not in the end become so suspicious of media people and their kith and kin. For whereas those who are weaned in 'folk circles' grow to recognize and accept that the revival is, among other things, a business, it can be hard to accept for a singer who has known traditional music primarily in a domestic environment.

Tales of the exploitation of Jeannie and her family are there for the collecting. There is the example of one singer who recorded Jeannie with assurances that her record album would be released shortly. Nothing was heard of the project again until her songs appeared on a record in the States, sung by the same singer. Even the failure to credit Jeannie as a source dismayed her; her husband Donald once listened to a Scottish singer give a fine rendering of one of her songs and then credit it to some fictitious woman from the Hebrides. Other members of Jeannie's family have complained of similar treatment.

Of all those who used Jeannie as a source, Hamish Henderson was the best equipped to expose her stories and songs to the public. His own upbringing in Aberdeenshire undoubtedly contributed to the rapport and empathy which he established with the family. At the time of their first meeting, Hamish was engaged in something of a 'Holy Grail' mission. Inspired by the experience of the nineteenth century collector, Francis James Child, who located a major source singer in Mrs. Brown of Falkland, Hamish, in the early 1950's, was searching for a similar figure in the rural northeast of Scotland — an area with a rich and longstanding musical tradition — searching unsuccessfully, until he was advised to go to the market at Castle Gate in Aberdeen. The idea of carrying the search to a city hadn't previously occurred to him, but there he was almost immediately directed to Jeannie. He was struck not only by her magnificent singing but also by the "tremendous fund and depth of song that was there to be explored."

Andrew Means is a British folk journalist, and Sara Grey Means is an American folksinger. They are currently living in Northern Scotland, where they plan to open a Folklore Center specializing in traditional music.

SING OUT!

The Deadly Wars

From the singing of Jeannie Robertson, as recorded on the Prestige/International album *World's Greatest Folksinger* (13006). Scottish folklorist Hamish Henderson annotated the song as follows:

"Robert Burns was an industrious folklorist, as well as a great poet. Sometimes he touched-up the songs he collected, sometimes not. But quite apart from his collection labors, Burns wrote a number of original songs which have entered the Scots folk tradition. 'The Deadly Wars' is one of these; it consists of the first two stanzas of the song 'When wild War's deadly blast was blawn,' ('The Soldier's Return'),



which Burns contributed to Thomson's *Scottish Airs*. The reason why this song has entered folk currency is not difficult to understand — the theme itself belongs to folk literature."

Freely

For the dead-ly wars, they are past and blawn An'
gen-He peace re- turn-ing It left
many's a sweet babe fa-ther-
less and many's a wi-dow mourning

For the deadly wars, they are past
an' blawn
An' gentle peace returning
It left many's a sweet babe fatherless
And many's a widow mourning

I left the lines and the tented fields
Whaur I'm no langer lodger
Wi' a humble knapsack, it's a' my wealth
I'm a poor but honest sodger

For a lea-licht heart was in my breast
My hands unstained wi' plunder
An' a' for Scottie, hame again
I cheery on dld wander

For I thought upon the banks of Coil
I thought upon my Nancy
I thought upon the bewitching smile
That caught my youthful fancy

Music was a family currency. Born in 1908, Jeannie soon became accustomed to hearing the old songs, and it was from her grandmother and mother that she learned much of her repertoire. As a descendant of the travelling clans, Stewarts and Robertsons, who until a couple of generations ago lived a largely nomadic life, Jeannie herself shared in the hard and sometimes dangerous experiences on the road.

Her parents, Donald and Maria Robertson, raised her in the Gallowgate district of Aberdeen, where the travelling people were well known for their love of music and storytelling. Jeannie was often involved in impromptu ceilidhs, and from this background she acquired her talent for the dramatic delivery of folktales and songs. Music was a constant companion, with her husband Donald Higgins (who died three years ago), and brother-in-law Isaac both playing pipes and fiddle, her three brothers singing, and later her children coming to inherit their parents' gifts.

Hamish described Jeannie as a "fluid" singer, suggesting that she was far more than a passive conveyor of folklore. She wrote her own songs and also adapted traditional material by taking two or more versions of a ballad and changing the text and tune as the mood suited her. As she grew older her style began to take on subtle and unique characteristics. She made considerable use of linking, bending and sustaining notes, words and even whole phrases. Her soaring range and the strident edge to her voice often assumed a menacing undertone in keeping with the dramatic content of her material.

SING OUT!

In describing her storytelling, Hamish Henderson once wrote of her self-confidence and "formidable" physical presence: "She turns her great black eyes on a member of the audience, and draws him wily-nilly into a sort of mute participation." This "Ancient Mariner" kind of ability was given additional potency, both in story and song, by her robust, incisive Lowland Scots dialect. It was reinforced by a strong supernatural element in her material. As might be expected from a life in which 'second sight' (clairvoyance) was accepted as an integral reality, the supernatural played its part in story, song, and conversation.

If there is a danger that Jeannie's daughter, Lizzie Higgins — well known as a singer in her own right — will begin to shrink from contact, at least she is more aware of the issues involved. She is familiar with her own tradition and the ways of the revival, and should be capable of finding a pivot between the two. Like her mother, she has a tremendous gift for storytelling. Fact and fiction merge as one listens to her, whether the subject be the Battle of Culloden or the North Sea oilfields off Scotland's east coast. One is drawn in by her personality, knowing that her singing is an integral part of her life and that she feels both passionately.

Lizzie's singing style is proof that music was shared by the whole family. For although it is a natural assumption to think of Lizzie as the successor in direct line to Jeannie, this is not absolutely the case. Jeannie's ballad singing was channelled

(continued on page 27)

The Coffeehouse List: Its Birth, Care, Feeding, & Maintenance

by Andy Cohen, with the help of Iris Meltzer,
Joan Pelton, and Bob Norman, plus a number
of other people who have made possible a
coordinated exchange of information.

Sometime in the not too far-off future, a "coffeehouse list" will be made available to Sing Out! subscribers and other interested parties. This list will be an orderly directory of places that regularly present what our culture is pleased to call "folksingers." The coffeehouse list will have on it bars, "professional" coffeehouses (like Caffe Lena), college coffeehouses, church-run rap-cellars, regularized house concerts, lunchtime gigs in junior college cafeterias, on Tuesdays, tea shops that let singers pass the hat on Sundays, colleges that "have coffeehouses" two or three times a semester, and so on.

These sorts of places, a lot of them don't last very long, but then, there's a lot of them. If you had a list of three or four hundred that was reasonably accurate, and you were a good performer, and your credit was good, you might be able to beat your way across the country and into heavy debt, singing all the while. Most of these places, you take what you can get. If you are assiduous and work your ass off, you can even make a half-assed living.

Keeping track of all the many places to play has to be a collective job. So far, this list is based on the "active" files of half a dozen people who do little else for money except play coffeehouses and folk festivals. How accurate the list is, and how well maintained it is, depends on the people who use it, add to it, and inform the rest of the people who use it.

Some folks that run coffeehouses and other folks who have compiled their own lists of places to play may justifiably get pissed at the publication of this document. Sorry. I don't want to overrun anybody with hordes of imitation James Taylors and Joni Mitchells — but there are pleasant surprises. To those who have their own lists, well, all of this information is public anyway, we're just putting it all together. We hope some good and not much harm will come of it.

There is a list being compiled from the gig sheets of a bunch of small-time gypsies who love their work. Maybe if we get enough compilation we can begin to make some systematic sense out of it. To performers, this means that you shouldn't hoard your gig sheets. To coffeehouse people, this means that you should keep us informed of your correct name, address, phone number, etc. In order to keep us up to date, send any and all relevant information to Joan Pelton and Cathy Westra, #8 Lindbergh Drive, Latham, New York, 12110. They are compiling a massive card file from which the

list will eventually be drawn, and from which it will be corrected and updated periodically.

The purpose of this list is not to pull people out of their own communities and send them off on an endless quest for fame. A musician's first responsibility may lie in his or her own community — but in these States, unfortunately, it's a rare community that can and will support its musicians. Of course some of the best music is made by people who are not professionals at all — but we feel a way should be open for those who want to develop their music as a craft; traveling music can be a valuable link between communities. Hopefully this list won't be taken as a stepping-stone to Columbia Records and the William Morris Agency. With a little effort, cooperation, some ingenuity, and more cooperation, we should be able to maintain a loose-knit folk circuit independent of the control of the major corporations and the government, and that kind of free space is something to be treasured.

To get the list in the first place, send \$1.50 to Sing Out!, 106 W. 28th St., New York City, 10001. You will find ads for the coffeehouse list in the Folk Market Place section of Sing Out!, and probably in Folk Scene, the Folknik and other folkie periodicals.

Some things you will *not* find in the Coffeehouse List: folklore societies and folk festivals. That's because they are available elsewhere. A list of folklore societies is available from the Archive of Folk Song, Library of Congress Music Division, Washington D.C., 20540, and a list of 465 folk festivals is available from the National Folk Festival Association, Suite 1118, 1346 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20036, for \$2.50. (You get it free when you send them individual yearly dues of \$5.00, so it sorta pays to join.)

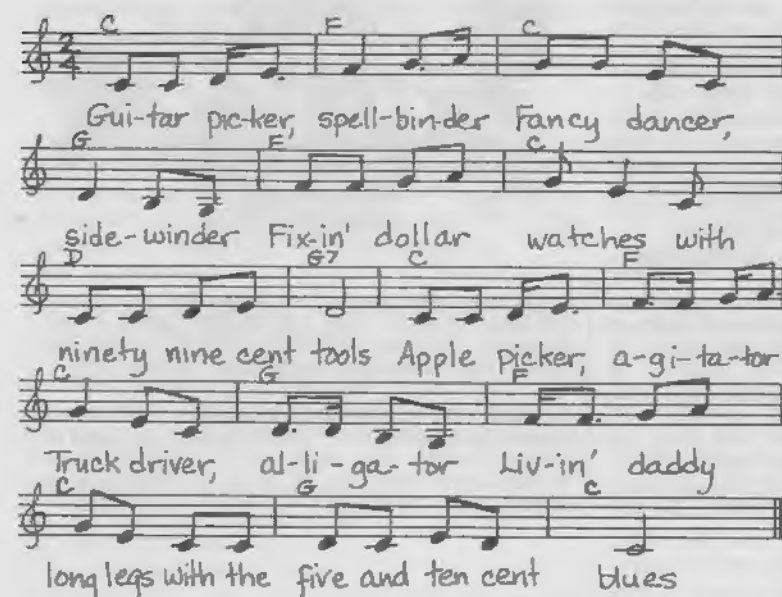
A few words about the coding that we're gonna do: lots of places that hire singles don't hire bands and vice-versa. Where we know, we will mark (S), (B), or (S-B). Again, this sort of thing is up to the performers to keep us informed about. You might have to be in the union to play at a particular bar or club. If so, it will be marked (U). We're not going to tell you how much money you'll get, for a number of obvious reasons. But we will mark the list for Freebie, Per Cent, Pass the Hat, or Guarantee. Bear in mind that there are some jobs that don't pay, like the Nameless Coffeehouse in Boston, but everybody who does pay goes there to find new talent. Also, we will indicate to you how to go about getting jobs — by personal audition, tape, record, hootenanny, or whatever.

A last cautionary word: people who are well known, even if you think you are "better" than they are, may get the gig you're after. They got those gigs because they were persistent, non-temperamental, did good shows in the past, helped to build the club to what it is today, were on time for the gig, and a whole host of reasons that have more to do with their general behavior than how many notes they can play or how many songs they can write. If you really want to be a gypsy wanderer for a few years, get used to playing for what you can get, sleeping on floors, hitchhiking, helping out, and waiting. If you are truly good, you won't have to convince anyone. If you aren't, you'll find out quickly enough.

Andy Cohen, sometimes known as "The Twangoleum King," is a singer and songwriter and, one of the proprietors of the Asheville Junction Coffeehouse in Asheville, North Carolina.

Five & Ten Cent Blues

Words and music by Andy Cohen.
©1975 by Andy Cohen. Used by Permission.



Guitar picker, spellbinder
Fancy dancer, sidewinder
Fixin' dollar watches with ninety-nine
cent tools
Apple picker, agitator
Truck driver, alligator
Livin' daddy long legs with the five
and ten cent blues

Good mornin' silver sunup
Took all night for you to come up
Rollin' down to Dixie on a sweet roll
and a song
Hitch-hikin', half crazy
Blind stupid, bum lazy
Waitin' for a long while to bid
St. Lou so long

Rosy mornin', bare trees
Old man ridin' on a cold breeze
Overcast and underpaid and nothin'
much to lose
Telephone poles and empty fields
Cold days and hot wheels
Flyin' birds and flowin' words and
the five and ten cent blues

Pipefitter, bullshitter
Baby sitter, early quitter
Can't find her, don't mind her
droppin' in for tea
Post facto, exacto
Back to back and black to go
A quarter's worth of flowers and a
nickel's worth of me

Cold weather, don't mind it
Goin' where the sun shines
I'm rollin' down to Dixie in my
oldest pair of shoes
Broke down, don't panic
Guitar picker turned mechanic
Hand me down the pliers and the
five and ten cent blues

Iida BANJOS



For years, banjo players — people who might spend months comparing hi-fi equipment or cars — have chosen their instrument without much thinking or listening. There's a kind of mystique surrounding the traditional name, and people are willing to spend a whole lot of extra money just to be part of that mystique.

But then, banjo players haven't had much opportunity to compare instruments. Music stores don't carry many banjos, and there's never been much of a choice. You can get a cheap banjo that sounds cheap, or you can spend an incredible sum for a quality instrument (and then wait months for delivery).

Iida is now manufacturing a line of professional quality banjos. If you're looking for a banjo, spend some time with an Iida.

You may find Iida's sound, workmanship, price and availability very much to your liking.

For a free catalog write:
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Box 805
New Hartford, Conn. 06057

Souling Song

The end of October and start of November is the time of Hallowe'en, All Saints and All Souls, a time once thought full of magic, when the dead temporarily returned to the world of the living and roamed around the villages on the misty evenings. Till recently in parts of the Midlands and the Northwest, children went from door to door begging for soulcakes. Soulcakes were food for the momentarily-returning dead, so that they would not feel rejected and thus be made angry. The little trichordal tune based simply on a scale of three adjacent notes within the minor third, is one of the most primitive we have.

— the Watsonsons

The Watsonsons were well-known in England for their fine unaccompanied group renditions of traditional British folk songs. "Souling Song" is from their Topic album *Frost & Fire — A Calendar of Ceremonial Folk Songs* (12T 136, Topic Records, 27 Nassington Rd., London NW3 2TX, England — distributed in the U.S. by RoundHouse, POB 747, Somerville, MA 02144. This album was once issued in the U.S. as Elektra EKL 321/EKS 7321). Fans of the



Watsonsons will be glad to know that the group has recently re-formed, with Martin Carthy a new member, and has recorded a new album for Topic, *For Pence and Spicy Ale* (12TS 265).

Readers who receive this issue after Hallowe'en should be advised that "Souling" is often sung at Christmastime, and that with a slightly more conventional tune can be sung successfully in concert with "God Rest Ye, Merry Gentlemen."

Chorus

A soul, a soul, a soul cake Please, good Missus, a
soul cake Apple, a pear, a plum, or a cherry, or
a-ny good thing to make us merry One for Peter
two for Paul Three for him that made us all God
bless the master of this house, the mi-str-ess al-
so— And all your lit-tle chil-dren that
round your ta-ble grow— like—

Chorus:

A soul, a soul, a soul cake
Please, good Missus, a soul cake
An apple, a pear, a plum, or a cherry
Or any good thing to make us merry
One for Peter, two for Paul
Three for him that made us all

God bless the master of this house,
and the mistress also
And all your little children that 'round
your table grow
Likewise your men and maidens, your
cattle and your store
And all that dwells within your gates,
we wish you ten times more (Chorus)

The lanes are very dirty, and me
shoes are very thin
I've got a little pocket I can put a
penny in
If you haven't got a penny, a ha'penny
will do
If you haven't got a ha'penny, then
God bless you (Chorus)

MERCEDES SOSA (continued from page 18)

death squad that has assassinated hundreds of people in the last year. Now Mercedes has been threatened, too, but she will not stop singing:

"I make a great effort to reach the people. I don't sing for commercial success, nor only to entertain. It's important to me to travel, everywhere I go there are beautiful people to sing to. That is why I say life has been good to me — that is why I sing (Violeta Parra's) 'Gracias a la Vida'."

Mercedes' last words to us in February were these:

"To the North American, the progressive one, to the one who thinks, to those who live with all the comforts here but never forget that there are other people who are unprotected, who have no justice or freedom or means to survive, to that person whom I know exists — I embrace you." ●

Mercedes Sosa's albums on the Philips label include:

Yo No Canto Por Cantar 5053

Hermano 5067

Para Cantarle A Mi Gente 5097

Con Sabor A Mercedes Sosa 5108

Mujeres Argentinas 5842

El Grito De La Tierra 5274

Navidad Con Mercedes Sosa 5925

Homenaje A Violeta Parra 5982

Hasta La Victoria 5685

Cantata Sudamericana 8006

One source for these records is Rizzoli's International Bookstore, 712 5th Ave., New York City.

JEANNIE ROBERTSON (continued from page 23)

through Lizzie's brother, who died as a child, whereas Lizzie's early influence came from her father. One of Lizzie's childhood recollections is of playing her father's chanter when she thought he couldn't hear. It earned her a swift rebuke, for the pipes were strictly a male prerogative. Nevertheless, it was from her father and his pipes that she developed her style and learned many of her songs.

"He had so much to give," she recollected. "He had so much folklore. If God had spared him another three or four years I would have had the last (song) ... When he had six months to live, and he knew he had only six months to live, he wrote down a few songs." In Lizzie's own words, Donald Higgins deliberately kept away from the folklorists to avoid stealing his wife's thunder. And so it seems probable that the hollow, de-humanizing legend was allowed to shield more folk material than has been generally realized. "He's died and he's left with some of the best traditional folk stories ever," said Lizzie.

Visiting Jeannie in her final months, one couldn't help but be struck by the modesty of her surroundings, her pain, discomfort and poor health. The loneliness of a woman whose voice once commanded silence from thousands. There can't have been many visitors towards the end, but among them were those who came with tape recorders hoping to squeeze ballads out of a woman so ill that she could hardly talk. Without a word the phantom awaited her death, and then emerged in one final spasm of valedictions and epitaphs ●

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The six string banjo that he played almost exclusively (tuned and played like a guitar) gave him a distinctive percussive sound. His repertoire ranged from 'pre-blues' sounding novelty songs to 'hard-core' blues standards (many of which he authored), and it is curious to listen to the potpourri of influences in his recorded output.

Few of his contemporaries could match Papa Charlie's extremely subtle and unusually complex playing. There is no pattern or set 'sound' to his technique — it's a very free style, always varied but never losing its swing.

"Shave 'Em Dry" is as good an example as any of Charlie's pick. The obvious thing to watch for is the right hand thumb that propels the syncopation of the tune. There is also no pattern involved; the idea is to get the kind of dragging syncopation down, and then just play the changes. The chords are a standard progression and the melody a classic. The chords are: E / E7 / A / A#dim / E / F#7, B / E.

Shave 'Em Dry

(♩ = 140) FAST

Alternate syncopation:

Same type syncopation for the rest of the chords

Key: ↑ = Brush I = Index D = Damp (right hand)
T = Thumb M = Middle

Now here's one thing can't understand
Why a bowlegged woman likes a
knock-kneed man
Mama, can I holler, daddy, won't you
shave 'em dry

Now I'm goin' down South, spread
the news
State St. women wearin' brogan shoes
Mama, can I holler, etc.

Now I'm goin' away to worry you
off my mind
You keep me broke and hungry,
mama, all the time

Now here's one thing can't understand
A good-lookin' woman likes a
working man

Now don't see how you women can sleep
Leave me all day without a bite to eat

Now if it wasn't for the powder,
store-bought hair
State St. women couldn't go nowhere

Now I went to the show the other night
The people on State St. dyin' to fight

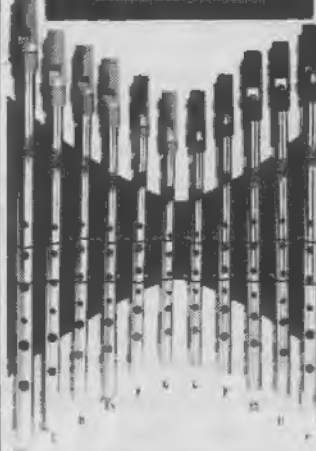
I ain't crazy about your yellow, or
about your brown
You can't tell the difference when
the sun goes down

When you see two women goin'
hand by hand
You can bet your bottom dollar she's
got the other one's man

Now run here, mama, lay back in
my arms
If your man catch you, I don't mean
no harm

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## RECORD CREDITS

Soundsheet recorded by Fred Selbert of Oblivion Records.

"Babylon Is Falling Down" — Dan Smith, vocal & harmonica; Pete Seeger, banjo; Barry Mitterhoff, mandolin. Recorded at the Sing Out! Folk Festival at the Bottom Line, N.Y.C., May 13, 1974.

"Old Buddy, Goodnight" — Bruce Phillips, vocal & guitar; Jane Voss, vocal; Marlin Grosswendt, dobro; Danny Coane, bass; Scott Campbell, fiddle. From the Philo album, *Good, Thought!* (Philo 1004), Philo Records, The Barn, N. Ferrisburg, VT 05473.

"Chugga-Tramp" — Bodie Wagner, harmonica & vocal, with accompanying musicians. From the Philo album *Bodie Wagner* (Philo 1015).

"Railroading On The Great Divide" — The New Lost City Ramblers: Mike Seeger, lead vocal and autoharp; John Cohen, vocal and guitar; Tracy Schwarz, vocal & guitar. From the Folkways album *On The Great Divide* (FTS 31041), Folkways Records, 17 W. 61st St., N.Y.C. 10023.

"Fox Chase" — Dink Roberts, vocal & banjo. Recorded by Cecelia Conway and Tommy Thompson, Feb. 21, 1974.

"Cancion Con Todos" — Mercedes Sosa, vocal with accompanying musicians. From the Philips album *El Grito de la Tierra* (6347005, Argentina), available from Rizzoli's International Bookstore, 712 5th Ave., NYC.

"The Deadly Wars" — Jeannie Robertson, vocal. From the Prestige International album *Scottish Ballads and Folksongs*, Prestige Records, 15 Columbus Circle, NYC. This album is out of print as far as we know.

"Souling Song" — The Watsons, vocals. From the Topic album *Frost & Fire* (12T 136), Topic Records, 27 Nassington Road, London NW3 2TX, England; available in the U.S. from RoundHouse, POB 747, Somerville, MA 02144. Also issued in the U.S. as Elektra EKL-321/EKS-7321, but currently out of print.

"Shave 'Em Dry" — Papa Charlie Jackson, vocal and six-string banjo. From the Yazoo album *Papa Charlie Jackson — Fat Mouth, 1924-1929* (L-1029), Yazoo Records, 245 Waverly Place, NYC.

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